(a) the States where availability of high yield varieties of seeds, insecticides, pesticides and counselling facilities to farmers for better and higher production are not satisfactory;

(b) the places in Uttar Pradesh where the above facilities are not adequate; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard and also to strengthen the system of disseminating advanced technology in the field of Agriculture to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Pesticides and Insecticides are availiable in adequate quantity in the whole country. The overall avilability position of seeds is satisfactory, except for minor shortages due to varietal choice. The counselling facilities to the farmers for better and higher production is being provided by the State Extention Functionaries, who provide prompt advice on various aspects of plant protection including safe and judicious use of pesticides. This is supplemented by the State Agricultural Universities and the field Stations of Central Directorate of Plant Protection who organise demonstration on Plant Protection technology and impart training to farmers from time to time.

(b) Marginal shortages of certified seeds were observed in some of the wheat, paddy, urad, Moong and Soyabean growing areas of U.P.

(c) The arrangements for the supply of seeds in the State is the responsibility of State Governments. They have been advised to make all out efforts to overcome these marginal shortages in certified seeds.

Under the Training and Visit (T&V) system Government official organise periodic training programmes to disseminate advance technology to farmers in crop protection and production technology.

In addition agriculutral universities, Research Institutions/Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) also organise various training courses for the benefit of State level and district levell agricultural extention officials under the Central Sector Scheme of minikit programmes. These trained officers organise training courses and camps at block and village levels for the benefit of farmers.

Assistance for drought affected areas of Gujarat

3316. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a request from the Government of Gujarat for financial assistance of more than Rs. 350 crores to meet the requirements of droughts affected areas in the State;

(b) whether Government have sanctioned the required amount; and

(c) if not, by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) A memorandum has been received from Government of Gujarat seeking additional Central assistance of about Rs. 600 crores for drought relief operations during 1991-92.

(b) and (c) The request of the State Government of Gujarat is being examined in the light of the existing scheme of the Financing Relief Expenditure and a decision will be taken shortly.

Problems of cotton-growers of Andhra Pradesh

3317. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a High Powered Committee was appointed to go into the problems of cotton growers in Guntur and Prakasam Districts of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what were the recommendations of the Committee and what action Government have taken thereon; and

(c) what steps have been taken to liquidate the overdues of cotton growers to the nationalised banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A High Powered Committee headed by Dr. P. D. Ojha, the then Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India, with a view to ameliorating the distress caused to cotton growers by attack of pests and drought in Prakasam and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh during 1987-88, recommended for extending credit support to the affected farmers and providing adequate facilities for plant protection, irrigation, quality seed supply etc. in the affected districts Government of India accepted the recommendations of the Committee and instructions were issued by the Reserve Bank of India in June, 1988 to all scheduled commercial banks to extend credit support to the affected farmers. Steps have also been taken to provide better plant protection facilities, irrigation and ensure supply of quality seed through the implementation of Intensive Cotton Development Programme in important cotton growing districts of Andhra Pradesh including Prakasam and Guntur districts.

(c) High Powered Committee did not recommend the liquidation of overdues of affected farmers. Therefore, the question does not arise.

Registration of Neem pesticides

3318. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Insecticides Bureau (CIB) is delaying the registration of Neem products; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) what is the progress made by the sub-Committee appointed for formulating the guidelines for Neem and other Botanical pesticides; and

(c) whether Government have received any proposals for the development of safer pesticides from plants; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No, Sir. Registration Committee constituted under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968 deals with the registration of insecticides and not the Central Insecticides Bureau (CIB).

(b) Registration Committee had appointed a Working Group (not Sub-Committee) during September, 1990 to formulate guidelines for Neem and other botanical pesticides. The report of the Working Group was considered by the said Committee at its meeting on 25th July, 1991 and the approved guidelines were circulated to the Associations of the Pesticides Industry. Representations received for simplification of said guidelines from the Industry, they were modified in consultation with the prospective manufacturers of neem based insecticides. These guidelines were approved by the Committee on 18th November, 1991 and circulated to the Associations of the Pesticide Industry.

(c) Such proposals are being generated in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and their Institutes who carry out Research and Development on this subject on a continuous basis.

Relief material for natural calamities

3319. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 60 per-cent to 70 per cent of relief material provided for victims of natural calamities like flood, earthquake etc. does not reach the needy persons; and